

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides a method, system, computer program product, and method of doing business with automated electronic business ("e-business") services by using a structured markup language processing engine and structured markup language documents. The structured markup language, which in the preferred embodiment is the Extensible Markup Language ("XML"), is used to describe the data and processing invocations to perform in carrying out e-business services (which may include invocation of a number of sub-services), and to automatically synchronize the interactions that are necessary in carrying out the service. The interactions may involve multiple business partners. The processing of multiple input documents and multiple output documents may be required, which is handled efficiently by the present invention. The present invention operates using a generic service processing engine, thereby minimizing or even completely avoiding the need to write application-specific logic for dealing with the service interactions among business partners. The disclosed techniques may also be used advantageously for automating other types of applications that can be described using finite state machines to handle data and process interactions.